March Comes in Like a Lion

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY UMINO CHIKA
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#BWYS@IRC.IRCHIGHWAY.NET
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RAW PURCHASED & SCANNED BY CHARA
TRANSLATED BY KEWL0210
CLEANED & TYPESET BY CHARA, LABRADOR & KEWL0210
QC BY KIWIISH & MARIS

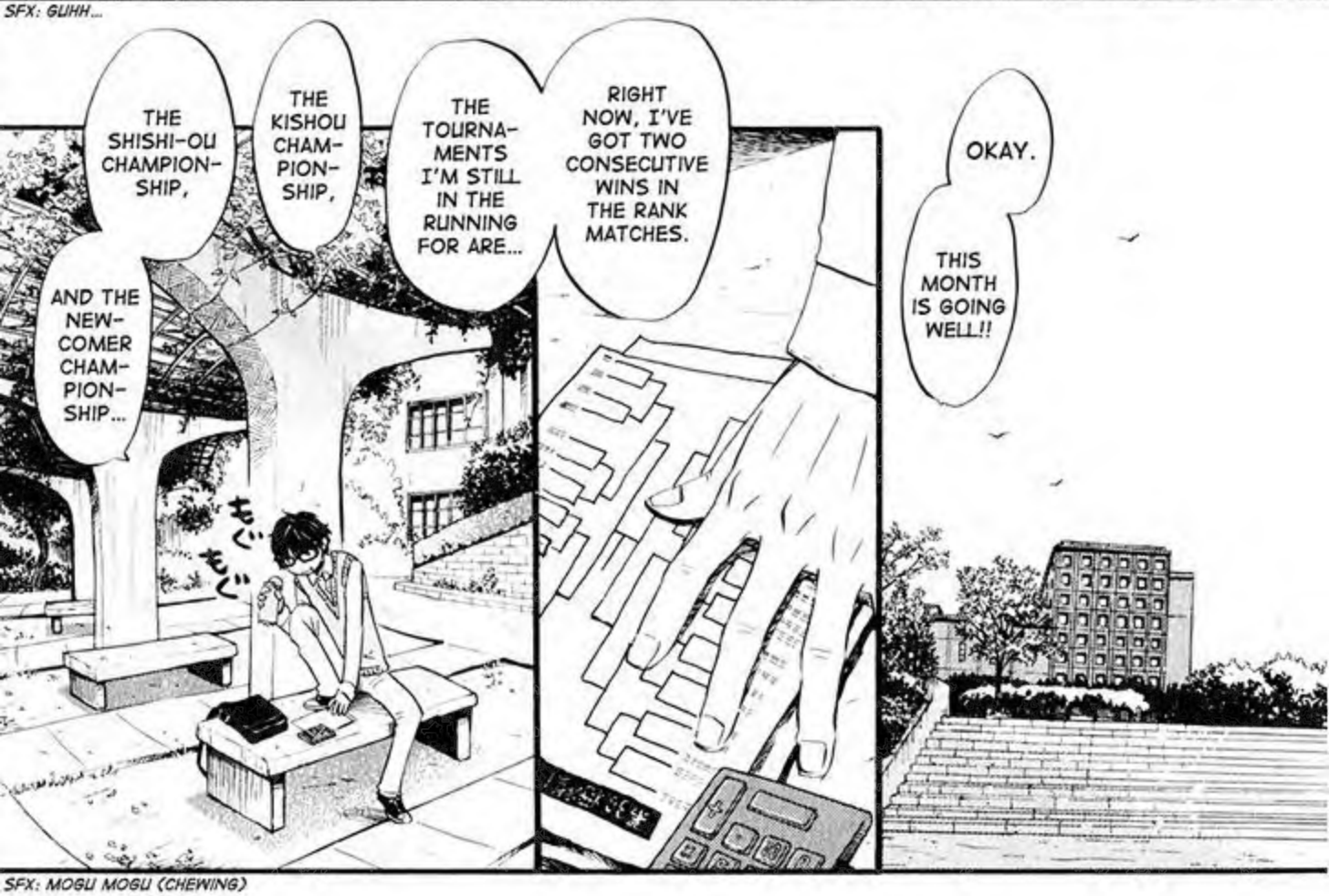
Chapter. 57

Letter

T-THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK, TOO.
GOOD JOB TODAY, KIRI-YAMA 5-DAN.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
SFX: GIH
ギッ

IF I CAN GET JUST ONE MORE WIN, I'LL MAKE IT TO THE SEMI-FINALS OF THE KISHOU CHAMPIONSHIP PRELIMINARIES!!
THAT MAKES FOUR WINS!!
ALL RIIIGHT!
ぐっっっ
将棋会館

SFX: GUHH...


THE SHISHI-OU CHAMPION-SHIP,
THE KISHOU CHAM-PION-SHIP,
THE TOURNA-MENTS I'M STILL IN THE RUNNING FOR ARE...
RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT TWO CONSECUTIVE WINS IN THE RANK MATCHES.
OKAY.
THIS MONTH IS GOING WELL!!
AND THE NEW-COMER CHAM-PION-SHIP...
もぐもぐ

SFX: MOGU MOGU (CHEWING)

I REALLY WANT TO WIN IN THE SHISHI-OU CHAMPION-SHIP...
THEN I CAN BREAK INTO MY GOAL AMOUNT!!
BUT THE NEWCOMER TOURNAMENT...
IF I CAN COME OUT ON TOP IN GROUP 5 AND GET INTO THE TOURNAMENT TO DETERMINE THE CHALLENGER...
SETTING THE PRIZE MONEY ASIDE, I REALLY WANT TO GET ONE MORE WIN
SO I CAN GET THE MOMENTUM TO MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO FINALS!!
ALRIGHT!
PRACTICE TIME!!
C'MON, YOU'VE GOT THIS!!
I'M GONNA BE THE NEWCOMER KING!!
SFX: PASHI PASHIH

MORN-ING!
MORN-ING!
SFX: ZAWA ZAWA
ザワ
ザワ
……
Quit making goo-goo eyes, moron!
SFX: GOSHI... GOSHI GOSHI... (WIPING)

SFX: KIIIN KOOOHN KAAAN
SFX: WAI WAI
キーン
コーン
カーン
SFX: GOSUH
ゴズッ!
GYAHH!
I knew I shouldn't have eaten all that...
Sigh...
I guess... this is what people call a belly-ache...
WAI WAI
kyahahaha
Thanks for the meeeal!
T-Takahashi-kun!
WHAT'RE YOU STILL IN HERE FOR?
BITCH.

SFX: GIKUH (GULP)
HEY, TAKAGI!!
THAT'S YOUR NAME, RIGHT?
Um, I think we were in the same class in first year...
.....
UM, THANKS, TAKA-HASHI-KUN,
BUT...
I'M FEELING KINDA...
SFX: BORI BORI (SCRATCHING)
Mhm...
Playing dumb
YOU WANNA COME WITH US?
OKAAY!
YOU GUYS READY?
I'M GONNA THROW IT, OKAY?
C'mooon, he said it'd be fiiine!
No way! I'm scared!
Start with Meg!
kyah
kyah
kyah

SFX: GUOHH
GET SET—
SFX: DOOONNN GYURURUH
HUHH?
WHAT, YOU GUYS GOIN' ALREADY?
Wait for me, Meg!
I don't care! That guy's crazy!!
Screw you!
That jerk!
SFX: GYAAAAA GYAAAAA
SFX: A... AWAWA...
What's wrooong?
Hey!
あ…
あ…
Takahashi-kun...
フル
フル
SFX: FURU FURU

TAKA-HASHI-KUN.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEM. THEY THREW THE GLOVE ON THE GROUND AND RAN OFF.
THE ONE WHO CHANGED SCHOOLS,
THAT WAS SAKURA CHIHO, RIGHT...?
HUH?
DURING OUR OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP IN SECOND YEAR,
SO THEN
IT WAS REALLY WINDY OUT, YOU KNOW. MY LUNCH BOX FLIPPED OVER, AND EVERYTHING WAS COVERED IN SAND.
SHE GAVE ME HALF OF HERS.
SHE SMILED AND SAID,
"HERE YOU GO".
ANYBODY WHO'D GIVE SOMEONE ELSE THEIR FOOD
IS A GOOD PERSON... I REMEMBER THINKING.
SO,
I'LL PLAY CATCH WITH YOU WHENEVER YOU WANT.

She sent Chiho-chan a letter
but she waited and waited and never got a reply...
What came instead
was a letter from Chiho-chan's mother—
Even here, Chiho is still attending school. She is undergoing rehab with a wheelchair at a place called "Heart Care Center."

Akira's speaking

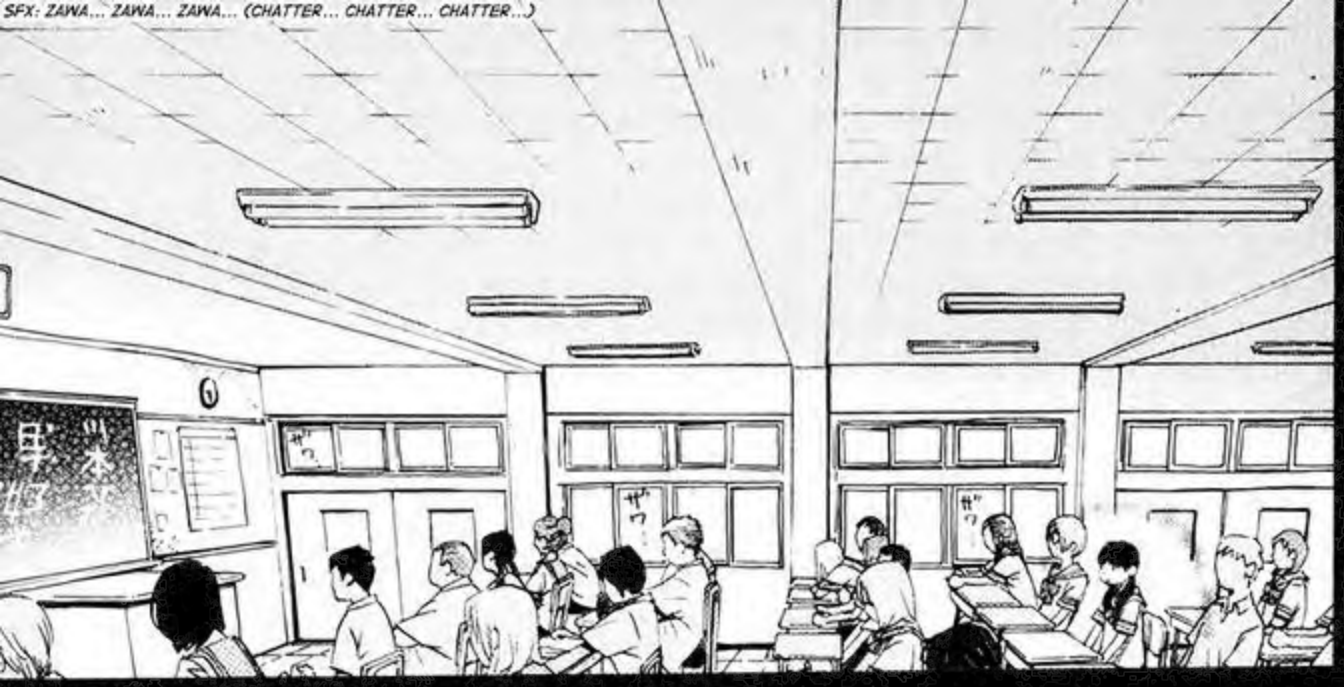
I'm sorry it's reality

I used to think

that if something was too painful, you could just walk away.

That it was okay not to respectably face people

who were doing less than respectable things.


SFX: ZAWA... ZAWA... ZAWA... (CHATTER... CHATTER... CHATTER...)

But...

Hinata likes
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
WH...
K-KAWA-MOTO-SAN!
HUH ...?
!!
Bow!!
ガラ
Stand!
SFX: GARA

I DON'T KNOW.

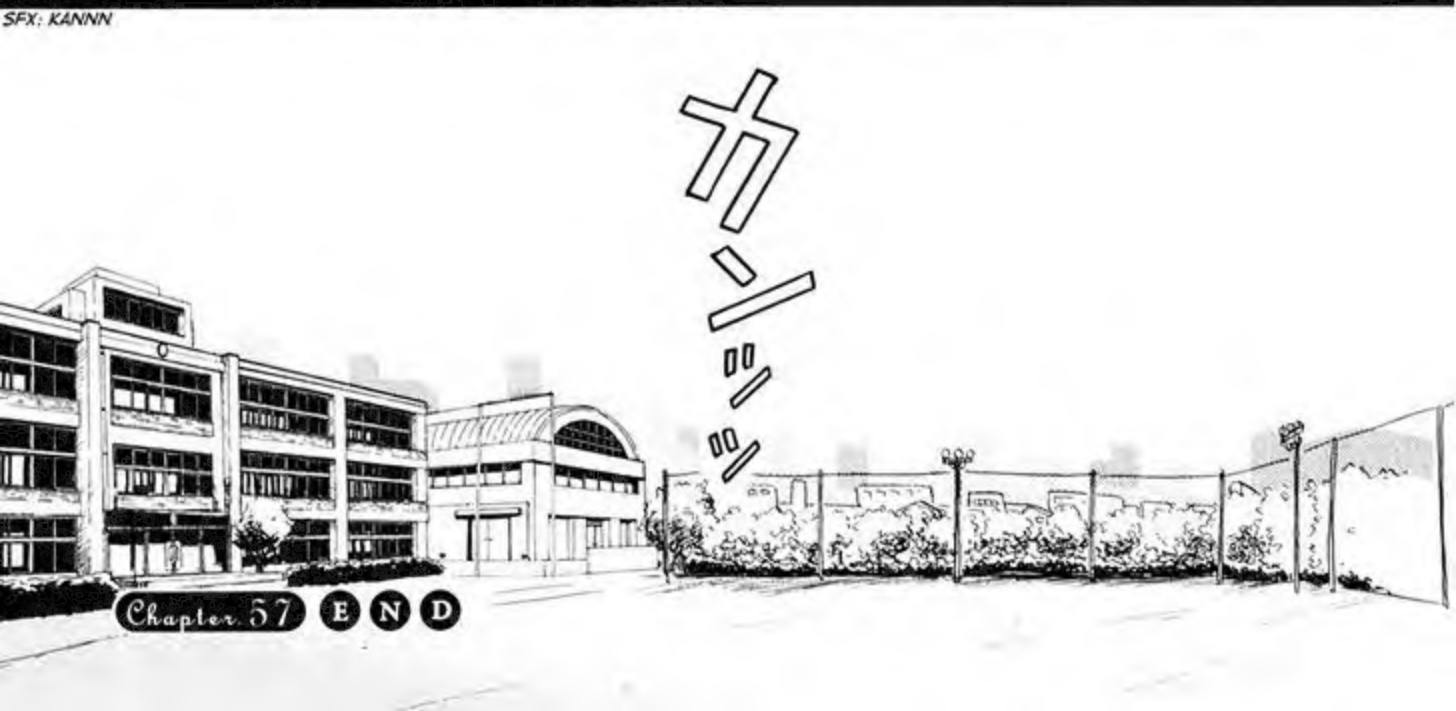
That's right, she...

isn't only in pain.

She's angry.

And,

it's a seething anger from her gut.



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